

Walnut-Dollison Historic District  
Springfield  
Greene County  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1252

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
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Historic American Buildings Survey

## WALNUT-DOLLISON HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Walnut-Dollison/Hampton Wedge Historic District is a suburban residential area created by the subdivision of several large land tracts. Located four blocks east of Springfield's central business district, it actually encompasses parts of several distinct neighborhoods. These display a notable variety of house forms, ranging in age from just before the Civil War to just after World War I. Along St. Louis Street was the oldest group, comprised of prestigious urban farms with impressively sized and ornamented houses; these have all been razed for subsequent commercial development. On the east-west Walnut, Elm and Cherry Streets are turn-of-the-century two-story frame town houses which are asymmetrically picturesque Late Victorian or massive Neoclassical in style. Along South Dollison Avenue, the principal north-south axis through the study area, are generally builders' houses - more modestly scaled and detailed than the custom-built homes on Walnut. The west part of the Hampton Wedge (historically called the East End) on McAllister and McDaniel is made up of small vernacular houses built by blacks, many of whom were servants for the large estate residences on the adjacent streets. Finally, infilled among the other houses are three 1910s and 20s bungalows, representing the last stage of residential development in the district.

Although the neighborhoods retain their overall residential character, many of the individual structures have been compromised to varying degrees through deferred and insensitive maintenance and subdivision into student housing for nearby Southwest Missouri State University. The location for the proposed University Plaza redevelopment project, the neighborhoods are scheduled for clearance in the near future.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The settlement core for what would eventually become the City of Springfield began in 1828 when brothers John Polk and E.M. Campbell led a group of families into the area from Maury County, Tennessee. Others soon followed from Tennessee, and by 1832 immigration into the emerging village and surrounding lands had increased markedly. Typically, the first permanent settlers were not the first visitors to the area. White hillmen-hunters-stockmen followed the White River up from northeast Arkansas early in the nineteenth century. Indians - principally Osage, Kickapoo, Shawnee and Delaware - also preceded major Euro-American settlement, as did individuals and small groups of whites. By the late 1820s settlement in the newly formed state of Missouri had begun to branch south and east from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers along the smaller tributaries and their watersheds in the northwest Ozarks. Emigrants came primarily from Tennessee, Kentucky and the Carolinas. Springfield was one of scores of crossroads or riverside communities which sprang up during this initial settlement period between 1825 and 1840.

By 1835 the village was still growing steadily if unspectacularly, but it remained essentially a frontier enclave which bordered a great wilderness. Located on the

gently rolling Springfield Plateau on the edge of the Kickapoo Prairie, the community served as a local hub for the outlying region and as a crossroads trading post at the juncture of the east-west White River Trace and the north-south Boonville Road, the two major overland arteries through the region. In that year a United States Land Office was opened in town - the first in the state away from the Mississippi/Missouri River settlements. As the only official registry for hundreds of square miles of steadily settled land, it attracted additional commerce for local merchants. Also in 1835 John Polk Campbell gave fifty acres of his originally patented quarter section of land to newly formed Greene County, forming a nucleus for the new town. Typical of speculatively platted towns in the midwest and patterned after Campbell's home town of Columbia, Tennessee, it was laid out with four major streets radiating from a central public square along the cardinal compass points. This is an urban form traceable to the New England villages of a century before and to Europe before that. Although streets and blocks were laid out, the existing forty or so single-story log structures remained in a somewhat haphazard arrangement. A county courthouse was later erected in the square and was subsequently destroyed during the Civil War. By 1838 twenty merchants were licensed in the town, including five grocers.

The 1835 platting began to change the patterns of growth and settlement of Springfield almost immediately. The Old White River Trace from St. Louis and St. Genevieve had entered the village from the northeast, probably along the Wilson or Jordan Creek valleys. After the platting, its entrance into the town was realigned along the street which branched from the public square to the east. This was named, logically, St. Louis Street; it formed the principal entrance to Springfield. Two years later, in 1837, several quarter section tracts of land were preempted along St. Louis Street east of the town center. Among these, adjacent to the east of John Campbell's second claim, was the claim of Judge James Dollison for the northeast quarter of Section 24, Township 29N, Range 22W. This would eventually include the study area for this survey. Dollison built a house and cultivated a field just northeast of the present-day intersection of St. Louis and Dollison Streets. He received a patent for the land in September 1848 and continued to occupy it until his death in February 1862. Dollison had held a majority of his quarter section intact. It was left to his heirs to sell it in 1866 as a single tract to Edwin T. Robberson. Robberson subdivided the land and began selling various-sized parcels later that same year. As the land changed hands through the late nineteenth century, it was further subdivided into successively smaller pieces until it was completely broken down into typically sized suburban house lots by the turn of the century.

The town during this period continued to grow, spurred by a steady flow of emigration and a general prosperity. The first business buildings began to appear along the streets in the mid-1840s; brick buildings began to appear alongside the primarily log structures in the 1850s. The population of the town at that time totaled around 400 people. In 1858 the Butterfield Southern Overland Mail Company began operations, starting from Memphis and St. Louis and ending in California. The Oxbow Route the stage line followed passed through Springfield, enhancing the town's role as a transportation nexus. The period preceding the Civil War was one of dramatic growth and prosperity for the area as agriculture and livestock commerce picked up and mineral strikes were made nearby. By 1860 the population had grown to around 2,500 and by 1870 the town totaled 5,555 people. The last quarter century marked a time of continued steady growth and expansion of commerce for Springfield. Several

industries were started in town after the arrival of the railroad in 1870, including the Springfield Wagon Company, which would later grow into the nation's largest wagon manufacturer by the turn of the century. By 1900, the town's population totaled 23,267 people. As residential development spread from the city center eastward and houses began to appear on the newly subdivided lots in the study area, neighborhoods with distinct demographic compositions began to emerge. The study unit cuts across several of these socially stratified neighborhoods, developed from the late 1850s to just after the turn of the century. They are discussed separately below:

#### St. Louis Street

The first residential development in the study area, naturally enough, occurred along the first street through the area - St. Louis Street. Until the completion of the railroad into north Springfield in 1870, it remained the primary entrance into town from the east. The 58 acres that James Dollison had sold during his lifetime consisted of land which fronted St. Louis Street and extended southward; this was acquired by Henry and Charles Sheppard prior to the Civil War. The New Jersey-born brothers had more-or-less equal frontage on St. Louis, with Henry's land extending two blocks south to Elm Street and Charles' only a single block to Walnut. At about the same time, John Kimbrough, Henry's business partner in a general merchandising firm in town, acquired a similarly sized tract from John Campbell immediately west, and the three men together owned all of the St. Louis south frontage between Dollison and Kimbrough Streets. Across the street, Kimbrough's brother-in-law William C. Price acquired the land directly across from Kimbrough, which he subdivided into Price's Addition in 1869, after first reserving a lot for himself. To the west of Price the land was owned by J.J. Keet, to the east H.M. Parrish and W.C. Porter.

All six men had built large brick and frame houses prior to the Civil War. Henry Sheppard's house was completed and his brother's almost completed when the war broke out; both were used by combatants during the conflict - Henry's house as a Confederate hospital and Charles' as a Union warehouse. Similarly Kimbrough's and Price's antebellum houses were used as officers' quarters. Dr. Parrish's 1849 residence and land were used as a Confederate campsite. After the war, Charles Sheppard completed his house and later added a Victorian front porch to it; Henry extensively remodeled his house using the prevailing Victorian style of the period. The others were similarly updated stylistically, and the Kimbrough and Price houses were later replaced by neoclassical edifices. Although at the fringe of a growing city, these impressively large houses sited on expansive tracts of land remained largely intact through the 1890s. Essentially urban farmsteads maintained for the moneyed elite of Springfield, they contrasted with the more densely settled neighborhoods springing up around them. The houses underwent successive extensive alterations and/or replacements as the neighborhood began to change late in the nineteenth century. Other Late Victorian residences began to infill, the rears of the original large holdings were subdivided and sold off, until eventually the rural ambiance had been lost. In recent years, St. Louis Street has turned commercial, and now none of the original mid-nineteenth century and few of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century second generation residences remain. The rural homesteads have been replaced by mid-twentieth century commercial buildings - garages, stores, restaurants, hotels, etc.

### Walnut, Elm and Cherry Streets

Henry Sheppard purchased 58 acres of land fronting on St. Louis Street from James Dollison and sold half of his frontage in October 1858 to his brother Charles. In 1866, Dr. Edwin T. Robberson bought the remainder of Dollison's patented quarter section from Dollison's heirs. Although Charles' land extended only one block south to Walnut Street, Henry's extended a block beyond to Elm. Between 1867 and 1870, Henry Sheppard and Robberson platted a series of long, narrow single-family house lots along East Walnut Street on either side of Dollison Avenue. This was the second major subdivision of James Dollison's original 1837 claim. These additions to the city, known as E.T. Robberson's and Henry Sheppard's First and Second Additions, proved attractive during a decade which saw the city's population more than double. By 1872, twelve houses had been built along Walnut between Kimbrough and Dollison. The 1880s was a time of relative stagnation in the city's growth, and few new residences were built in the area. By the mid-1890s, though, growth and prosperity picked up again, and home construction restarted along the street. Elm and Cherry Streets experienced similar changes in streetscapes at the time. The remaining undivided land in the study area along Walnut was platted in 1896 as Miller's East Walnut Addition by J.N. Miller's heirs. By 1910 all of the large single-family residences which characterize the streets today had been erected and were occupied.

Whereas St. Louis represented the true early Springfield wealth of the pioneer merchants in town, the houses along Walnut Street, and to a lesser extent Elm and Cherry Streets, were built for the upper-middle class of a half-century later. Merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, clerks and insurance and real estate agents resided in the neighborhood at the turn of the century. Some of the houses were custom designed and built for specific clients (929 East Walnut, the Cooper-Herman House), while others were built speculatively to sell or rent (919 East Walnut, the Charles G. Rose House). Most households employed servants, who either lived in the attic or a rear bedroom upstairs or in the primarily black East End neighborhood on the next block. Many of the houses west of Dollison on Walnut and Elm replaced earlier, smaller frame structures; only one extant residence known to date back to 1880 has been located in the neighborhood. It is the Garrett W. Hackney House (819 East Walnut), substantially renovated and expanded around the turn of the century.

Architecturally, the houses on Walnut, Elm and Cherry Streets through the study area present a mixture of stylistic expression, indicating a range of building age and client taste. The building lots tended to be very narrow, with an average width of about 55', and long, averaging 200' in depth. This limiting configuration shaped the houses which were built in the neighborhood. Large frame buildings, 2- to 2½-stories high, they tended to be long and narrow in conformance with the lots, with driveways which typically extended along one lot line. As stated before, only one 1880s vintage residence remains today - the Hackney House. It was originally a 1½-story frame building laid out in a vernacular el and sided with vertical boards and battens. With an asymmetrical roofline and applied wood ornamentation, it probably typified the average middle-class mid-Victorian housing of the period. The ca. 1900 enlargement of the house typified the later, more pretentious houses built along the street around the turn of the century. Now 2½-stories in height and much larger, it was transposed from a typical cottage to an upper-middle class Late Victorian town home, similar in scale and ornamentation to its new neighbors. (The

transition was somewhat forced, however, as the building now displays peculiarly elongated upper level proportioning.)

The houses built along Walnut, Elm and Cherry Streets reflect the transition in architectural styles which was occurring around the turn of the century. Victorian tastes, which had been popular for half a century before were at the time gradually giving way to classical and colonial revivals and generally more austere architectural expression for residential structures. The custom designed homes of the merchant class in Springfield, these represented the prevailing tastes of the influential upper income group in town. All were imposing structures, built slightly higher than the street and sidewalk levels and surrounded by masssively crowned deciduous trees. They were frame, typically 2½ stories in height, with the uppermost story an unfinished or partially finished attic. Placement of these relatively large detached houses on the narrow lots has given a distinctively suburban (in the nineteenth century sense) ambiance to the neighborhood.

Perhaps the most openly Victorian of the existing houses in the study area is the house at 903 East Walnut Street. A 1½-story frame cottage built ca. 1895, it presents the picturesque roof profile, asymmetrical massing and rich interplay of wall textures which are hallmarks of the Late Victorian period. The full-width veranda across the front of the building features paired Tuscan columns on paneled wood pedestals, square balusters and a dentiled cornice with a shallow pediment over the entrance. The octagonal corner tower with a steeply pitched tent roof is one of only two found in the study area. A representative of the later neoclassical revival houses built between 1900 and 1910 is the Charles G. Rose House, 919 East Walnut. A simple two-story frame box broken only by a slanted side bay and a projecting rear wing, this house depends upon neoclassical detailing on the entablature and around the windows and doors for its stylistic expression. It is massed and ornamented more austere than its Late Victorian predecessors. Between these two styles can be found several buildings in the area which display elements of both, illustrating the transitional nature of the neighborhood. The Jewell-Baldwin House at 919 East Walnut is a fine transitional structure. Built speculatively in 1902-03, it possesses features which are both common among contemporary houses in the neighborhood and notable in their degree of refinement. The house combines the symmetry and simple detailing of the neoclassical revival with a spatial organization and irregular massing of form held over from the Late Victorian.

A house that is typical of many of the large frame buildings along the three streets is Gustavus A. Watson's first house at 836 East Elm Street. Built probably in 1896-97 on the site of an earlier house, its picturesque massing and variety and extent of applied ornamentation distinguish it as one of the better large frame Late Victorian residences in the area. Like most of its contemporaries its exterior walls are sided with beveled boards and the window and door trim are plain boards with moulded drip caps; the exterior is painted uniformly white. The asymmetrical front veranda winds around the north and west sides of the first floor and features round columns with turned balusters. The house is further distinguished by the decorative shinglework in the main gables which flare out slightly at the bottom and by decoratively scrollsawn gable springers. Watson moved from this building to a second, newly constructed house in 1922 around the corner at 515 South Dollison Avenue. This later house represents the final architectural development in the residential district -

the Bungalow style. With its off-center gable facade front entry, it is the only example of this bungalow sub-type in the study area. The bracketed cornices with decoratively exposed refter tips and heavily detailed front porch place it within the mainstream of this Arts and Crafts style. Another Bungalow was built across Dollison Avenue at 900 East Elm by traveling salesman Albert A. Hamel in 1919. It displays a single sweeping gable with exposed rafter tips and projecting brackets, full-width open front porch, second story sleeping porch and a picturesque array of window and door openings.

The Walnut, Elm and Cherry Street neighborhoods have retained their original single-family residential character. However, many of the large buildings have been subdivided into apartments and the buildings have been allowed to deteriorate through insufficient maintenance. The landscaping remains in typical fashion: grass and ground covers, large deciduous trees and foundation shrubbery are the norm, although expansive asphalt parking lots have been paved in the rear yards of a few of the apartment houses. Current condition of the buildings ranges from excellently preserved on exterior and interior (913, 929 East Walnut) to substantially compromised and deteriorated (737 East Walnut).

#### McDaniel Street and McAllister Avenue

Alongside the upper-income white neighborhoods on St. Louis and Walnut Streets, a neighborhood known historically as the East End and in this report as the Hampton Wedge appeared at the latter part of the nineteenth century. As the large estates along St. Louis Street were being broken up after the Civil War and the black slaves were released, a neighborhood comprised of small vernacular cottages was formed during the 1870s along Hampton Street. This was occupied largely by blacks who served the adjacent white households on St. Louis and Walnut Streets. Between 1880 and 1900 Minor (now McDaniel) Street and McAllister Avenue were created, forming the west end of the East End area. Dollison Place Addition was platted along McDaniel in 1888; it laid out a series of irregularly shaped and sized house lots. Despite the formal platting, however, house placement remained somewhat haphazard in the area, with two or more dwellings occupying the same lot at times. The house at 942 East McDaniel was attached to another residence through a frame passageway sometime before 1910. The second building, put up at the rear of the lot, and the passage are now gone.

The portion of the East End neighborhood cut across by the University Plaza study area is the western section, the newest part of the neighborhood. Houses were being built along this section of McDaniel Street as late as 1930. Typically they are modest frame cottages 1- or 1½-stories in height. Often the buildings started out as extremely small single-pen structures that were added onto sequentially through the years. The original forms were vernacularly derived, including tees, els, single-pen and saddlebag house forms. The house at 942 McDaniel is typical of the organic growth experienced by most of the structures in the area. Begun as a single-cell, single-story building, perhaps as early as the mid-1880s, it was first expanded by the addition of another room behind the original. Later a half-story was added over both rooms and a shed at the rear (which was itself enlarged later for a bathroom). A passage structure, as mentioned earlier, connected it with another house at the rear

of the lot. The building has been recently rented to students from nearby Southwest Missouri State University and is in a sadly deteriorated and compromised state at present. Most of the cottages in the neighborhood are simply massed frame boxes similar in scale to 931 and 933 East McDaniel. Built in 1926 and ca. 1915 respectively, they feature single moderately pitched gable roofs with gable facade front entries and virtually no architectural detailing. An unusual structure for the area is the house at 237 McAllister, another vernacular cottage which has undergone substantial alterations and additions. Evidence suggests that it was built ca. 1905 as a single-pen structure and enlarged dramatically sometime after 1910; a rear hipped addition was built later, followed by the addition of a shed-roofed bathroom in the northwest corner.

The neighborhood today is characterized by the modest residences on small, irregular lots, interspersed among overgrown, vacant lots. The area has been impacted significantly by the contemporary commercial development along St. Louis Street, and many of the buildings along the north side of McDaniel have been removed. Although shade trees can be found further east along McDaniel, they are absent throughout much of the East End included in the study area. Current condition of the individual structures, like those on Walnut Street, varies from case to case. Too small to subdivide into multi-unit dwellings and in many cases owned by descendants of earlier residents, they have largely remained single-family black dwellings. The houses at 922 and 926 McDaniel, for instance, are well-kept, with closely trimmed lot-line hedges; 237 South McAllister, on the other hand, stands vacant, stripped of most of its interior trim and fixtures in a lot overgrown with weeds. The neighborhood as a whole has undergone a far more drastic change since 1900 than Walnut Street to the south, but far less, of course, than St. Louis Street north.

#### Oollison Avenue

South Oollison Avenue forms the central north-south spine through the study area. Narrow, with small irregularly shaped lots along it, it has historically served as a connector between the principal east-west residential arteries through the area. Houses located on the corners of these streets with Oollison Avenue universally face the more heavily trafficked streets, leaving only the small interior lots along the avenue. Those built along Dollison present not a single homogenous neighborhood, but two distinctive groups of buildings separated in construction date by a decade or so. The 200-300 blocks between St. Louis and Walnut consists of detached and duplex houses built as the two adjacent streets were undergoing their formative development in the 1890s. These were occupied by a mixture of black servants and laborers (and at least one merchant family - the Hardricks) as the west edge of the East End neighborhood. The 400-500 blocks between Walnut and Cherry Streets feature single-family houses built between 1900 and 1910 and occupied primarily by white clerks and laborers.

Late Victorian is the prevailing architectural style among the remaining domestic buildings. The blocks between Walnut and Cherry present a series of modest Victorian cottages which were built speculatively to rent. Two typical Dollison cottage are the houses at 424 and 428 South Oollison. Identical and probably built simultaneously, they have the picturesque rooflines over an



asymmetrical el-shaped bodies with infilled front and rear porches. The detailing is mainstream Late Victorian, with boxed cornices with gable returns on the roofs, hipped dormers and Tuscan porch columns and turned balusters. The houses across the street on the next block are very similar in scale, material and construction date, differing only slightly in detailing and plan configuration.

The buildings along Dollison between St. Louis and Walnut offer more architectural variety. Like the other houses in the study area, they are 1½- to 2½-story wood frame structures covered (with one notable exception) with wood beveled or shiplap siding. The houses at 221 and 315 Dollison are typically scaled and ornamented for the neighborhood, although substantially altered in recent years. The former building, interestingly, appears to have been built originally as a duplex before 1895, something of a departure from the single-family norm. 308 South Dollison is a typical Neoclassical Box, similar in size and detailing to those around the corner on Walnut Street. One enigmatic structure on the block is the house at 321 South Dollison. This frame building, perhaps the oldest remaining domestic structure in the study area, displays elements from the Late Victorian period (turned balusters and newel, slanted bay, picturesque massing) with the pedimented window heads, returning cornices and symmetrical front facade of the two-story section that are indicative of the Greek Revival temple form. This mixing of the two styles - an old one with one that is even older - suggests an early construction date for an eclectic building or major alterations and/or additions to a very early building for this neighborhood. Another anomaly along the avenue is 300 South Dollison, the Hardrick House. Built in 1908-09, this massive duplex residence was first occupied by Burton A. and James S. Hardrick, black businessmen who owned Hardrick Brothers Grocery on St. Louis Street. It is the only brick-sided building in the study area - a Neoclassical Box which is contemporary in size and style with many along Walnut Street.

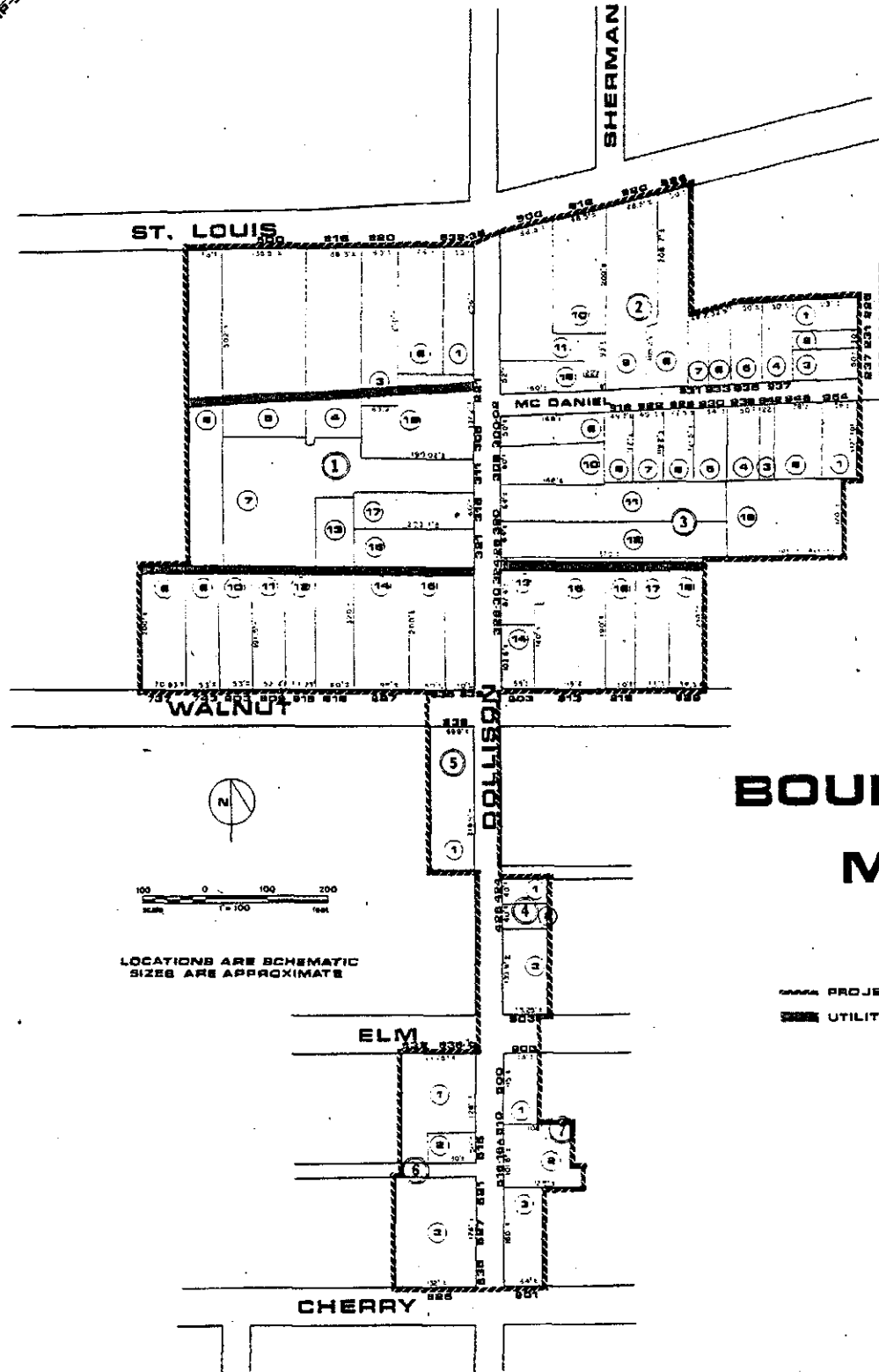
South Dollison Avenue has, like the East End, been impacted by commercial development along St. Louis. A number of the buildings have been removed and others have been altered substantially. Generally, the buildings on the 200-300 blocks have been subdivided into apartments and allowed to deteriorate greatly. The 400-500 block houses have been well-maintained as off-campus student housing.

Although the neighborhoods in the University Plaza study area have changed to varying degrees, they retain a good deal of their original late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century character. Walnut Street in particular has retained its architectural and environmental integrity. The study area, however, faces impact from the proposed University Plaza Project. Most of the buildings will be moved or razed and the composition of the neighborhoods altered substantially.

Prepared By: Clayton B. Fraser  
Principal, Fraserdesign  
August 1982

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URP-1



## BOUNDARY MAP

LOCATIONS ARE SCHEMATIC  
SIZES ARE APPROXIMATE

--- PROJECT BOUNDARY  
--- UTILITY EASEMENTS

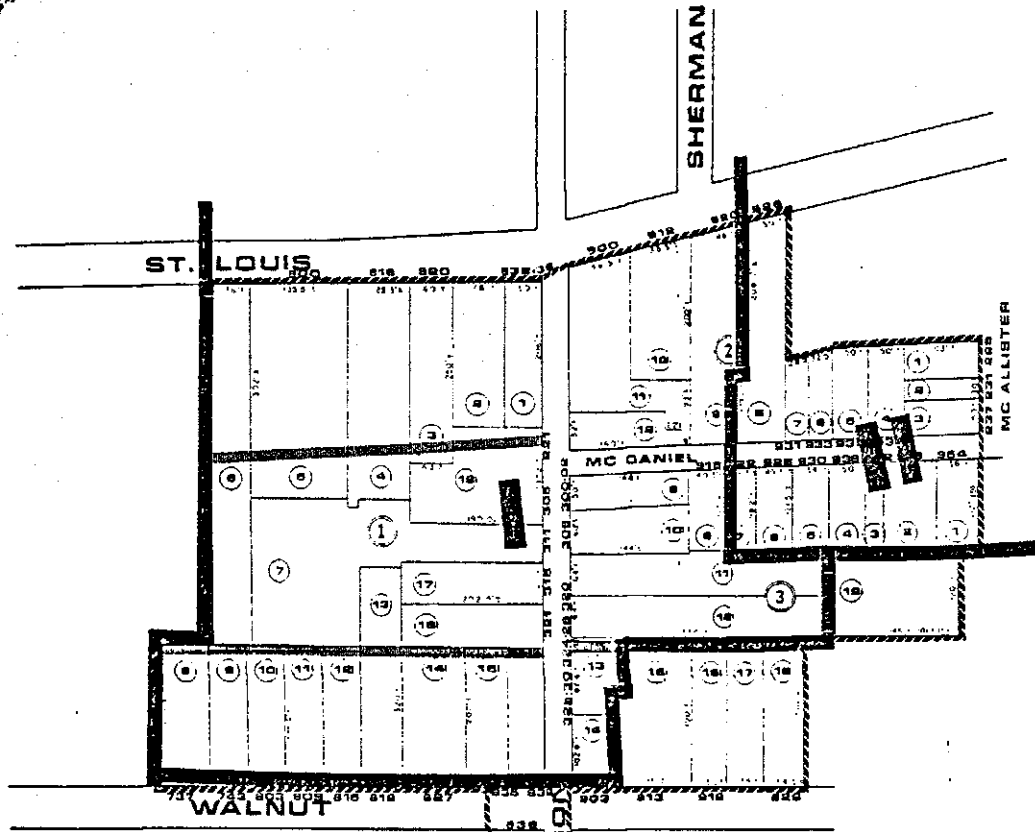
LAND CLEARANCE FOR REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD,  
GREENE COUNTY, MISSOURI.

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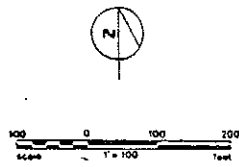
UNIVERSITY PLAZA  
REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
UDAG PROJECT NO. 1

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# BOUNDARY MAP



LOCATIONS ARE SCHEMATIC  
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--- PROJECT BOUNDARY  
--- UTILITY EASEMENTS

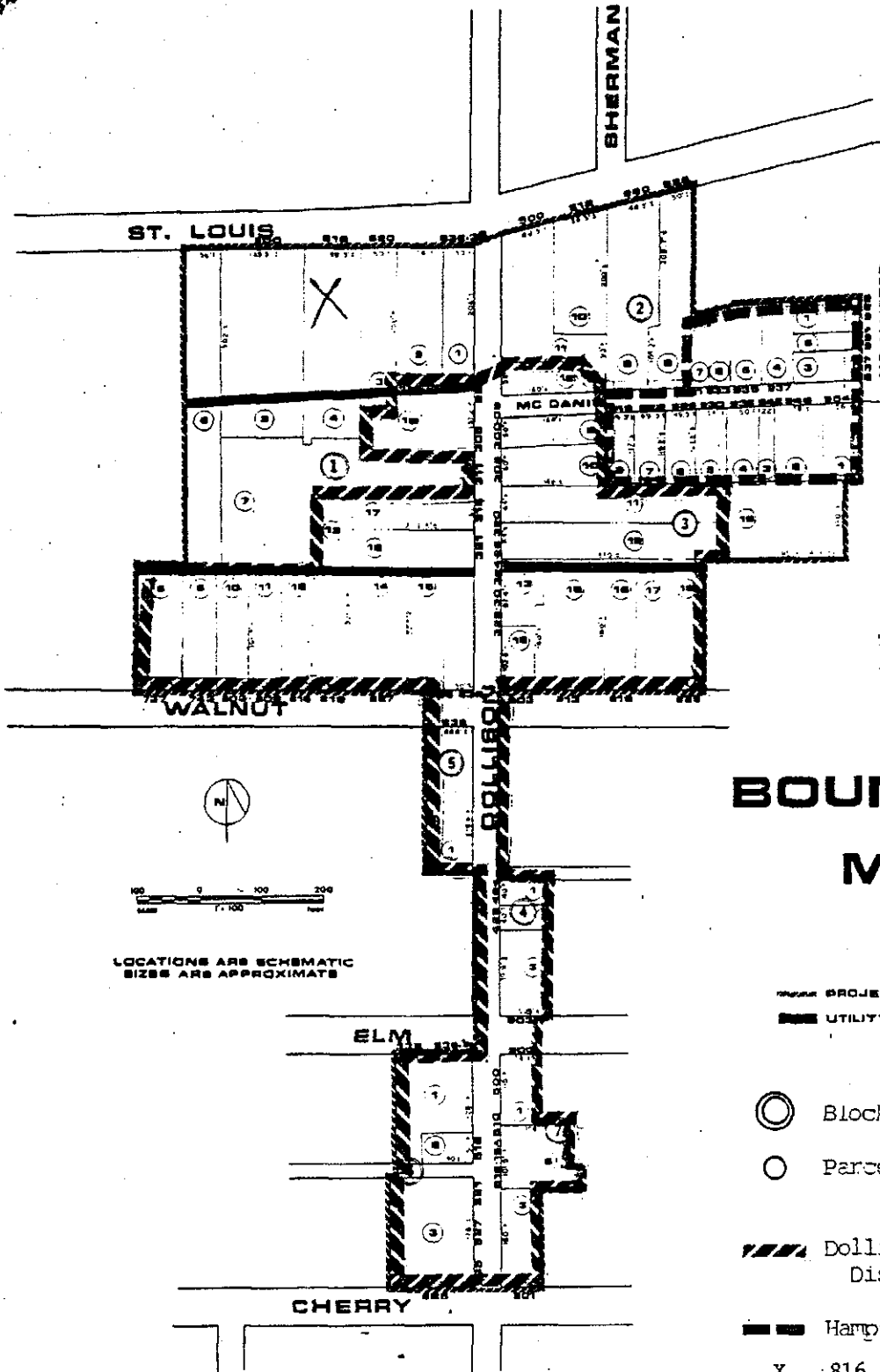
PHASING SCHEDULE

LAND CLEARANCE FOR REDEVELOPMENT  
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**UNIVERSITY PLAZA  
REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
UDAG PROJECT NO. 1**

REVISED: 3-5-81 DATE: 3-11-81 DRAWN: J. D. APPROVED: J. D.

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GREENE COUNTY, MISSOURI.

REVISED 12-8-81 DATE 12-11-81 DRAWN BY [Signature] APPROVED BY [Signature]

**UNIVERSITY PLAZA  
REDEVELOPMENT AREA  
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